

# Covid 19 Omicron outbreak Parliament protest: Sprinklers turned on, 'second wave convoy' en route

NZ Herald

11 Feb, 2022 06:12 PM 9 mins to read

(NZ Herald, 2022i)

[Quotation: Speaker Trevor Mallard]

Friday February 11: There are a record 446 new Covid-19 cases in the community today. Video / NZ Herald

Lawn sprinklers have been turned on, drenching protesters and their tents as hundreds of anti-mandate protesters continue to occupy the grounds outside Parliament for the fourth day.

Around 5pm, Parliament's lawn sprinklers were turned on. They were put on the soak setting rather than spray, so are drenching the lawn under the protesters and tents.

People placed cones on top of the sprinklers and put a call out through social media for any plumbers present in the crowd to assist them.

Speaker Trevor Mallard confirmed he had ordered the sprinklers to be turned on as part of efforts to clear the protesters. He said the sprinklers will stay on through the night.

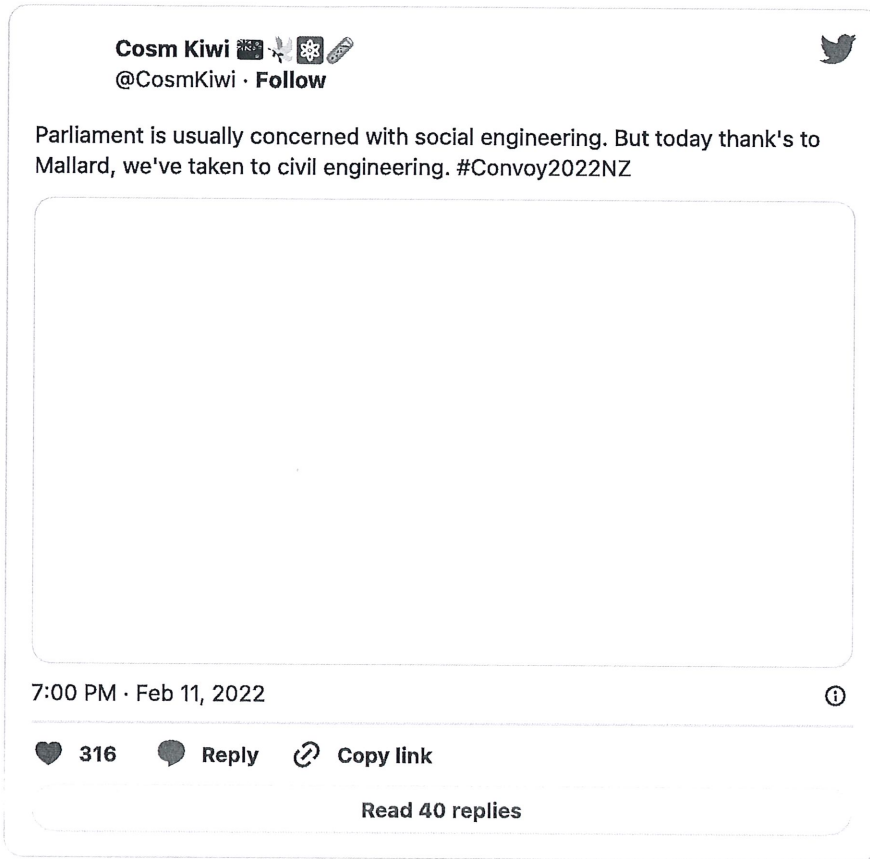
Mallard told 1News: "They're not legally on the ground, so there is no problem adding a little to their discomfort."

Meanwhile, frontline police officers attempting to control the ongoing Wellington protest outside Parliament have been ordered to stop carrying batons.

A "second wave" of protesters to bolster the occupation's numbers is believed to be heading south toward the capital this afternoon, after stopping at Bulls around 12.30pm.

In a statement shortly after 2pm today, Wellington District Commander Superintendent Corrie Parnell addressed images circulating widely of officers carrying batons while monitoring the protest this morning.

"Earlier today several staff were noted to be carrying batons. That was not in line with current approach and staff have now removed this equipment," Parnell said.



"It is important to note that police on Parliament grounds continue to take a measured approach."

He also addressed video and photographs circulating on social media - including footage of police dragging a naked woman from the protest crowd by her hair - that have sparked claims of police brutality from the protesters.

"Images and videos shared online often do not provide the full context of the protest activity and the difficult situation police staff face."

Parnell told Newstalk ZB's Heather du Plessis-Allen that Wellingtonians needed to prepare for a roadblock that could potentially last into tomorrow and through to Sunday.

"It's my aspiration, certainly intent, with the resources that we're bringing together to clear that passage way as soon as practically possible."

He said moving the more than 100 vehicles blocking streets near Parliament had presented a number of issues for Police, but it was a "fundamental priority".

"One of our major issues has been actually trying to acquire assets in the form of tow companies to assist us in that process. So we're still exploring a number of options and making progress there."

Parnell said they had experienced resistance to their requests from tow companies as a number of owners received threats throughout the day.

TOP

Over the past two days he said military assets like heavy haulage vehicles had also been considered as another option for shifting the vehicles.

Parnell said that a lack of leadership at times or a solidified cause had been a real difficulty for police trying to negotiate with protesters.

"We always knew that this wasn't going to be a short process, there was a number of complexities there and quite frankly it's not a matter that we will be able to arrest our way out of."

He said this was tested yesterday and it resulted in over 120 arrests, which is not an "end-state" option.

Moving forward he said they're busying themselves with a range of tactical options to resolve the protest.

Earlier this afternoon, Parliamentary staff were told to leave work early today if they can do so "out of an abundance of caution", as hundreds continue to occupy Parliament's lawn in breach of a trespass notice.

Several hundred people were gathered on the front lawn of Parliament singing and dancing among the dozens of tents still erected.

In dramatic and sometimes ugly scenes yesterday, more than 120 protesters were arrested and more than 150 police reinforcements have been brought in from around the country to help disband the occupation.

A recent social media post announced that a second "freedom convoy" is also travelling this afternoon from Gisborne through Bulls and Kapiti to Wellington on SH1.

The "second wave convoy" was due to leave Bulls at 1.30pm before heading south through Horowhenua and Kapiti Coast towards Wellington, the post said.

A speaker at the protest also addressed the fact that they do not have a leader or figurehead for their movement.

"We don't need one, we're united," he said.

Protesters are continuing to mingle around listening to music, while a line of police watch on from the forecourt. This has been the situation for the entire day so far.

Another speaker encouraged protesters not to heckle people walking past in masks.

"Let's channel our anger towards something productive," she said.

Likewise she advised people not to show anger towards the media so as to "not give them a reason to think we are aggressive".

Around 4.30pm police closed one of the gates to Parliament, sparking a moment of agitation among the crowd.

Police appeared to be starting to withdraw for the day as 15 officers moved away from the frontline, to loud cheers from the crowd.

Light rain continues to fall as protesters sing "Tūtira Mai Ngā Iwi".

## No new arrests on fourth day of protest

It is the fourth day the anti-mandate protesters have been gathered on the Parliament lawns.

Police have not yet moved into the crowd as they did yesterday, and no new arrests have been made.

Speakers have urged protesters to remain peaceful and keep themselves safe should police move again to arrests.

TOP

Parnell said in today's statement police were having to deal with children being brought to the protest.

"Police are also concerned that people are encouraging that children be brought to the protest site to support their efforts," he said.

At least two people who were arrested yesterday are back at the protest today. Police said yesterday those who were arrested would be served formal trespass notices from the grounds of Parliament.

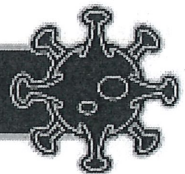
Two more people were arrested last night for "alcohol-related behaviour", according to Parnell.

"This is an extremely difficult working environment for our frontline staff," he said.

There are visibly far more tents and protesters than yesterday, as police make no attempt to move onto the lawn today. People have been coming in and out of the front gates throughout the day.

A protester said over a speaker they would be offering umbrellas in the event of afternoon showers – however, in spite of this morning's forecast there has not been a drop of rain.

One protester is holding a sign facing the media balcony that reads: "At no point in history have the people forcing others into compliance been the good guys."

**COVID-19**TO READ THE HERALD'S FULL COVERAGE **CLICK HERE**

In this afternoon's statement Parnell said: "Police have identified a range of different causes and motivations among the protesters, making it difficult to open clear and meaningful lines of communication.

"Misinformation, particularly on social media, has been identified as an issue.

"Some factions are actively promoting false advice about people's rights and police powers, which is misleading and factually incorrect. For example, the use of a particular word or phrase by an individual will not impact the arrest of anyone involved in unlawful activity."

The Wellington District Commander also reinforced the obligations protesters who are arrested must abide by.

"Under the Policing Act 2008, anyone arrested and taken into police custody is required to provide their name, age, date of birth and address," Parnell said.

"They must also let police take their photograph and fingerprints. It is an offence not to comply with these requests."

## Parliament security updated

Security arrangements in parts of the parliamentary precinct have changed again today after video taken of the protests from nearby Bowen House surfaced on social media.

Video taken from a high vantage point opposite the Beehive was uploaded to a social media channel claimed by white nationalist group Action Zealandia.

[TOP](#)

**Paparoa**  
@Paparoa3 · Follow

This Action Zealandia video was taken from LT McGuinness's construction site in Bowen House. This is the building providing secure access for staff to the Beehive.  
We have spotted Action Zealandia members joining the protest in the evening.

9:38 AM · Feb 11, 2022

171 Reply Copy link

Read 29 replies

Paparoa, which claims to monitor far-right activism, said the video was shot from a construction site in Bowen House, which provides access for staff to the Beehive.

"We have spotted Action Zealandia members joining the protest in the evening," Paparoa added.

Parliamentary Service today changed entry and exit arrangements from Bowen House.

Parliamentary staff have been told to leave work early today if they are easily able to.

As police moved into formation earlier this morning, some protesters could be heard yelling "remain peaceful" over megaphones - but other protesters hurled abuse at the arriving officers.

One speaker addressed the waiting crowd and encouraged them to stay calm as police poured into the Parliament forecourt.

They could be heard referencing rumours police would carry riot shields.

"Is there a riot here? No!" he said to the crowd.

TOP

This morning Attorney-General David Parker poured scorn on the protesters occupying Parliament's grounds, branding them "misguided" and "believing in garbage".

"You've got a tiny group of New Zealanders who are misguided because they believe the garbage that's on social media and they're blocking roads."

He said the actions of the protesters were preventing local businesses to open, people had been assaulted and abuse and threats had been hurled at journalists.

Yesterday, more than 120 people were arrested in a volatile day of "unprecedented" protests, with stretched police forces indicating the anti-vaccine mandate occupation could last days.

Tensions flared as police moved into "enforcement mode", and scores of officers advanced on the crowd.

Parnell said on top of 900 officers in the district, another 150 had been pulled in from across the country, with potentially more to come.



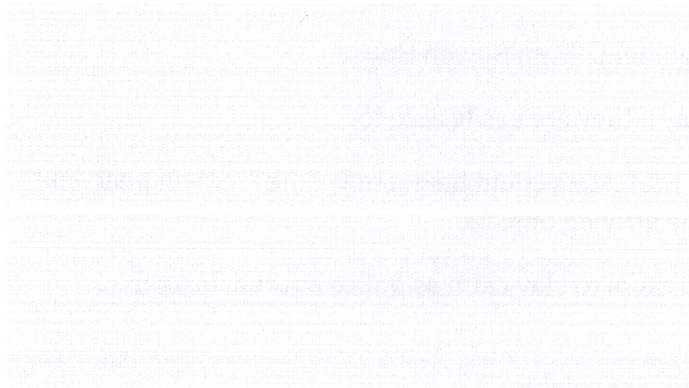
## Latest from New Zealand



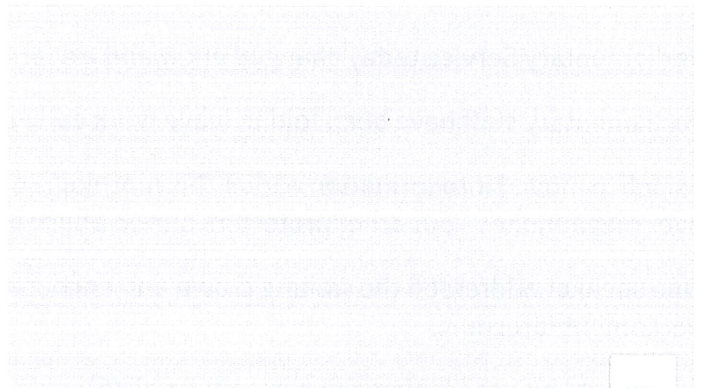
**Local Focus: Rotorua charities airdrop donated goods to Hawke's Bay residents**  
 08 Mar 11:31 AM



**Carmel Sepuloni takes a break to care for son who broke his leg**  
 08 Mar 11:27 AM



**Terrorism sentencing: Teen who planned Auckland terrorist attack took weapon to hockey game**



**'Ludicrous' spending on board weeks after RNZ/ TVNZ merger canned**

TOP